

David Ward: Slow Time
Previously unexhibited works since 1968

21 March – 10 May 2009

Teachers' Pack

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Light Drawing, 1978

Introduction to the exhibition

Slow Time presents a selection of over 100 works by British artist David Ward (b. 1951), made over the last forty years. Shown together for the first time, this exhibition includes drawings, photography, collage, painted reliefs and film. Many of these works have not been publicly exhibited before.

David Ward is most widely known for his photographic and light works of the 1980s, performances later in that decade and architecturally-related works using light, glass and sound from the 1990s to the present. In contrast, the works shown in Slow Time offer an insight into more intimate and unseen aspects of the artist's practice.

There are numerous distinct groupings within the exhibition, which form a remarkably coherent whole. As such, Slow Time reveals lines of continuity that have persisted over four decades and several key themes can be found in Ward's work: light, the body, the activity of line and the sensitive nature of surfaces.

The most recent work in the exhibition is *The Analysis of Beauty*, a two-screen digital video projection exploring the ceiling of King's College Chapel from beneath and above the famous fan vault.

To coincide with the exhibition Kettle's Yard has commissioned a new collaborative sound work by David Ward and composer Orlando Gough. Called *Two Pianos on Two Floors*, it will be found in the house during the exhibition.

Key Themes

- **Process and Experimentation:** Ward often sets himself 'rules' for how he is going to work and the processes he is going to use and then experiments within these parameters. For example, in the series of pastels *Landscape, Portrait, Light*, the colours come from arbitrarily mismatching pastels from boxed-sets intended for certain subjects, such as landscapes or portraits. Similarly, Ward's *Blind Drawings* are made without the artist being able to see the marks on the page (working with carbon paper and an inkless pen).
- **Accident:** Ward often relinquishes control of his work and introduces elements of chance. For example, the accidental double exposure photographs, or the *Uncontrolled Image* series, which were created by leaving exposed and partially developed sheets of photographic paper lying on the studio floor to be worked by traces of developer and fixer.
- **Movement:** Many of the works in this exhibition explore depicting movement, whether by capturing human or animal movement in a static image (*Seabird Drawings, Blind Drawings*) or the flow of chemicals (*Uncontrolled Images*) or in film (*Filmwater*).
- **Materials, surfaces & light:** Several groups of works include exploration of materials and textures reacting to light. For example, several of the *Light Drawings* are created by collaging photograms of patterned domestic glass. Similarly, in the prints *Casting the Die (Rodin)*, Ward has captured the tarnished surface of the sculpture in daylight, and has also displayed the edges of the prints – showing the marks of light on photographic paper.
- **William Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* (1753):** The title of Ward's film of King's College Chapel comes from William Hogarth's 18th Century book, in which he attempted to define what makes something beautiful. In his two-screen film, looking at both the decorative and functional sides of the fan vault, Ward also offers an opportunity to think about how we view this famous building. Hogarth developed a theory of the 'Serpentine Line' (an s-shaped curved line), arguing that

it signifies liveliness and activity, in contrast with straight lines or parallel lines, which signify stasis and inanimate objects. Ward is exploring these ideas in works which include s-shaped lines to depict animate subjects (such as *Blind Drawings*), as well as a series of photograms made from the movement of a single light source, titled *Serpentine Lines*.

Questions and Activities

1: *'With the passage of time, I've come to see some of these groups of work as the most complete things I've ever made'*

David Ward 2008

Most of the works in this exhibition have not been exhibited before, yet the artist kept some of them for 40 years.

- Why do you think the artist choose not to exhibit these works?
- Why do you think he kept them?



Flying Pelican, photographed by Étienne-Jules Maray, 1882

2: *'They were a trace of where the body has been'*

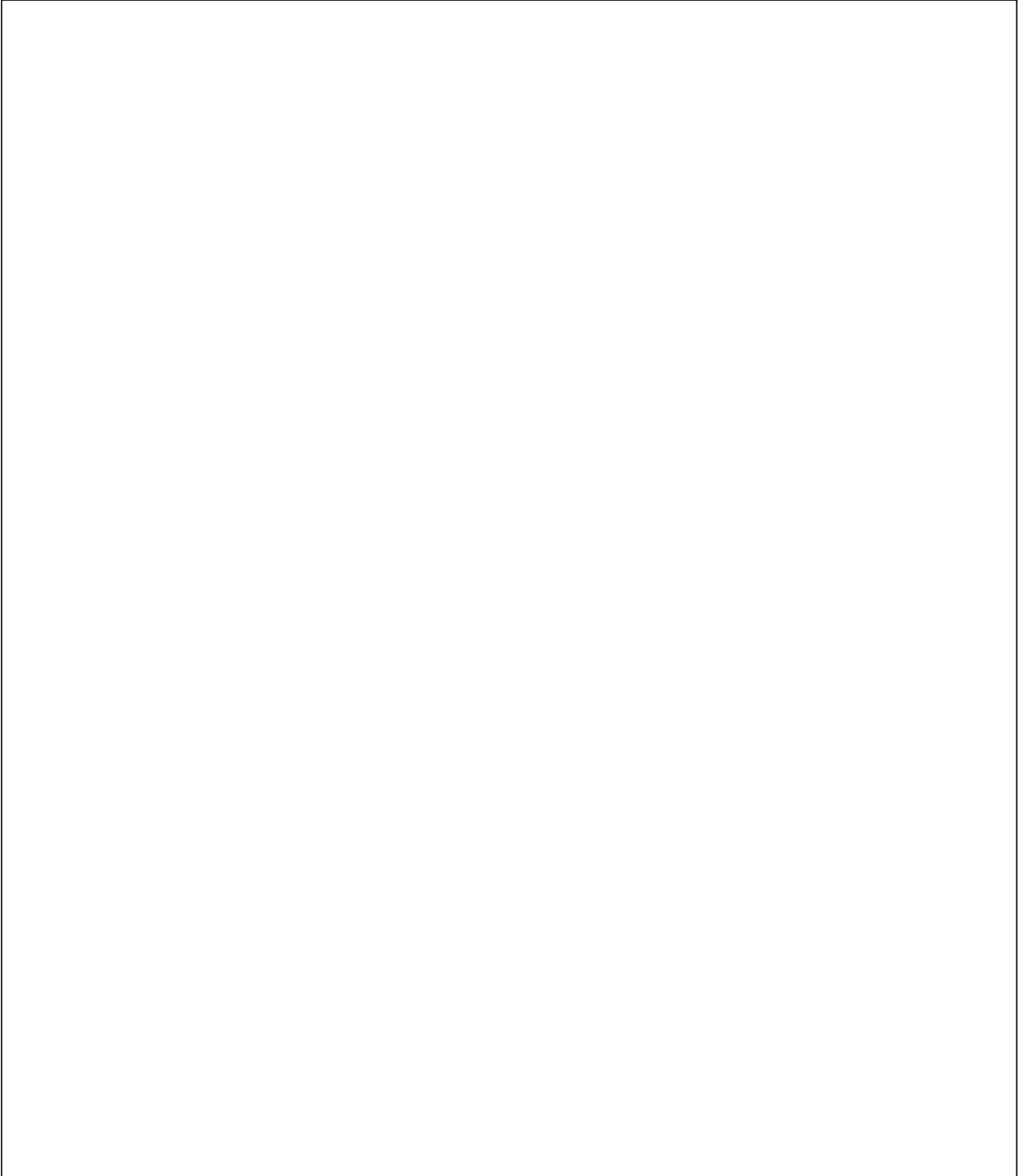
David Ward on Étienne-Jules Maray's photographs 2007.

Compare this photograph with Ward's drawings of seabirds.

- What are the differences between the two images?
- How are they similar?
- How has the artist depicted movement in the drawing?

3: In the exhibition, find the large photograph titled *Casting the Die* (Rodin).

Draw the statue in the photograph **without looking down at your paper** to see the lines you have made.





Uncontrolled Image



Casting the Die (Rodin)

- 4: *'When we look at this sculpture, before anything else we see a stained body'*

David Ward

- Both of these images are made with photographic processes, how are they similar and how are they different:
 - In the shapes that you can see?
 - In the textures that are shown?
 - In where they are light and dark?
 - In how they are made?
- Choose one of the images, what does it remind you of?
- Image each of these images is a still from a film. What would the film be about? What would the storyline be?



The Analysis of Beauty Still

5:

- Why do you think this film is called *The Analysis of Beauty*?
- If you had to choose a soundtrack to go with this film what would you choose?
- What pairs of opposites could be used to describe this film – for example: above and below?
- Can you think of any other pairs of opposites for other artworks in the exhibition?

Techniques

- **Photogram:** a photographic image made without a camera by placing objects directly onto the surface of a photo-sensitive material such as photographic paper and then exposing it to light. The result is a negative shadow image varying in tone, depending on the transparency of the objects used. Areas of the paper that have received no light appear white; those exposed through transparent or semi-transparent objects appear grey
- **Double exposure photography:** a technique in which a piece of film is exposed twice, to two different images. The resulting photographic image shows the second image superimposed over the first. The technique can be used to create ghostly images or to add people and objects to a scene that were not originally there.
- **Blind drawings:** Drawings made through carbon paper using an inkless pen so the marks can only be seen when the top sheet of paper is removed.

Biography

- 1951 Born in Wolverhampton
- 1967-68 Bilston Technical College
Interest in Concrete poetry, the work of E.E.Cummings and James Joyce
- 1968-69 Wolverhampton College of Art: Foundation Course
- 1969-73 Winchester School of Art, Diploma in Art and design: Painting, Printmaking and Art History
Interest in Constructivism and Vladimir Tatlin and Ellsworth Kelly's use of colour
- 1971-2 Takes a year out from art school to work for Patrick and Delia Heron in Cornwall, including assisting Patrick in his studio
Interest in Paul Klee and the studies of bodies in motion by Étienne-Jules Marey
- 1974 Works as gallery assistant at Serpentine Gallery
Marries Susanna Heron
Makes paper collages and black and white photographs
- 1978-79 Lives in New York and rents a studio at Berkeley
Travels through New Mexico, Arizona and California
Increasing interest in performance and dance; attends performances by Merce Cunningham, Meredith Monk and Bruce McLean
- 1981 Works as photographer, documenting art and architecture
- 1982 Rent of studio at SPACE Studios allows development of large scale works, including photograms of the artist's body
- 1984 Produces his first performance at Riverside Studios (where architect Will Alsop and artist Bruce McLean also had studios)

- 1987 Joined staff at Fine Art Department of Goldsmiths College, London. Other staff members include Michael Craig-Martin and Richard Wentworth
- 1989 Co-curates *British Art Show 3*
Visit to Moscow and St Petersburg, seeing the Matisse's at the Hermitage
Separates from Susanna Heron
- 1991 Artist-in-residence at King's College and the Cambridge Darkroom
- 1994 Visiting artist for Harvard University Public Arts residency and Member of Faculty at Visual and Environmental Studies.
Spends five weeks travelling in Mexico
- 1995 Five weeks in India and five weeks in Venezuela, travelling up the Orinoko River
- 1997-98 Artist-in-residence at Durham Cathedral
Teaches at the Fine Art Department of Sunderland University
- 2001 Marries Judy Adam and travel together to Morocco
- 2003 Renewed involvement with choreography and dance, including working with choreographer Siobhan Davies.
- 2006 Joint selector for the Kettle's Yard Open with filmmaker Jayne Parker
- 2007 Travels to Venice, meets mosaic manufacturer who provides glass for exhibition *Venice: City of Dreams?*